

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
USINT HAVANA PRIORITY

S E C R E T KIGALI 745

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, PORT, CG, OAU, US
SUBJECT: SHABA INVASION -- INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH RWANDANS

REF STATE 125192

SUMMARY: RWANDA DEEPLY CONCERNED AT LATEST KATANGESE
PENETRATION OF SHABA. THOUGH LACKING PROOF, GOR CON-H
VINCED SOVIETS/CUBANS ARMED AND SUPPORTED INCURSION.
RWANDA LINKS ITS OWN SECURITY CLOSELY TO THAT OF
EASTERN ZAIRE, AND PRESIDENT WATCHING US RESPONSE TO
"CHALLENGE" IN SHABA AS MAJOR TEST OF OUR CREDIBILITY
HERE. END SUMMARY.

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1. FOREIGN MINISTER NSEKALIJE LISTENED CLOSELY THIS
MORNING TO MY RECITAL OF REFTEL TALKING POINTS, PLUS
A FEW OTHER LATE NEWS ITEMS FROM SITREPS. NSEKALIJE
SAID HE WAS VERY PLEASED AT OUR TAKING
INITIATIVE TO CONSULT WITH GOR AND EXCHANGE VIEWS. HE
THEN RECITED RWANDAN VIEW OF CURRENT SHABA SITUATION AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS, IN TONES OF GRAVE CONCERN:

--AS BEFORE, HE STRESSED HOW CLOSELY LINKED RWANDA'S TBAAMSERITY WAS TO THAT OF ZAIRE AND ESPECIALLY KIVU AND SHABA PROVINCES.

-- ALSO REPEATED ANALOGOUS SITUATION GOR SEES BETWEEN KATANGESE GENDARMES THREATENING ZAIRE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND RWANDAN TUTSI EXILES NOW LOCATED IN UGANDA AND BURUNDI, POSING (IN GOR VIEW) SIMILAR THREAT TO RWANDAN SECURITY.

-- GOR FIRMLY CONVINCED, ALTHOUGH IT LACKS PROOF, THAT SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE BEHIND LATEST KATANGESE INCURSION, IF NOT ACTIVELY FIGHTING ALONGSIDE KATS. LOGICALLY, SAID NSEKALIJE, THERE IS NO WAY INVADERS COULD HAVE GOT MATERIAL AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT WITHOUT AT LEAST THE ACQUIESCENCE OF CUBANS.

2. NSEKALIJE THEN SAID HE HAD CONSULTED WITH PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA LAST EVENING, AFTER RECEIVING MY REQUEST FOR URGENT MEETING, AND PRESIDENT HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO ADVISE ME AS FOLLOWS: RWANDA WAS AT FIRST GRATIFIED AT FRENCH, BELGIAN, AND US POSITIVE RESPONSES TO MOBUTU'S APPEALS FOR HELP, IN PARTICULAR BY OUR PLACING 82ND AIRBORNE UNITS ON ALERT. SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, OUR COMMITMENT SEEMED TO BE WILTING -- FRANCE ALREADY TAKEN
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UP WITH MILITARY ACTIVITY IN LEBANON, WESTERN SAHARA, AND "PERHAPS" DJIBOUTI; BELGIUM WORRIED ABOUT ADVERSE PARLIAMENTARY REACTION TO FURTHER INVOLVEMENT; AND US APPARENTLY RELAXING AFTER EVACUATION OF MOST OF OUR NATIONALS.

3. VIA NSEKALIJE, PRESIDENT WARNED THAT, IF SHABA FELL, "GOR COULD NO LONGER HAVE CONFIDENCE IN US AND WESTERN ALLIES." WE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO PREVENT CUBANS FROM ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES IN BUJUMBURA, WHERE THEY WERE NOW "POISED" READY TO TAKE PART IN SHABA TROUBLES. AFTER ANGOLA AND THE HORN, RWANDA FEARED WE WOULD PROVE SIMILARLY IMPOTENT TO DEAL WITH DETERIORATING SITUATIONS IN CHAD AND, ON THE HORIZON, KENYA. SOVIET GAINS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA HAD, IN PRESIDENT'S VIEW, BADLY UNDERMINED OUR CREDIBILITY AND THAT OF NATO PARTNERS. HE WAS THEREFORE "VERY WORRIED" OVER OUR REACTION IN SHABA AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO STAND BY MOBUTU WHO -- FOR ALL HIS FAULTS -- WAS OUR ALLY.

4. NSEKALIJE DID NOT, OF COURSE, PASS UP CHANCE TO REFER TO RWANDA'S OWN REQUEST FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE,

TURNED DOWN SOME MONTHS AGO AFTER LENGTHY WASHINGTON DEBATE. US COULD PREACH ABOUT AFRICANS SOLVING AFRICAN PROBLEMS, HE SAID, BUT UNLESS GOVERNMENTS HAD MILITARY MEANS TO DO SO, OUR PREACHING DID NOT COUNT FOR MUCH. IF RWANDA WERE ATTACKED BY EXILES (WHO HE STRONGLY BELIEVES ARE ARMED AND TRAINED BY SOVIETS ALREADY), GOR WOULD NOT ASK FOR 82ND AIRBORNE HELP BUT ONLY FOR BASIC EQUIPMENT IT NEEDS TO DEFEND ITSELF. WOULD US ASSISTANCE BE FORTHCOMING? IN TIME?

5. COMMENT: I GOT NOWHERE STRESSING TO FONMIN THAT EXTRA-AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR KATANGANS (NOT TO MENTION RWANDAN EXILES) WAS UNPROVEN, NOR THAT COLD WAR SHOULD NOT BE TRANSPLANTED TO AFRICAN CONTINENT, NOR THAT ZAIRE'S AFRICAN FRIENDS
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SHOULD RALLY AROUND. LIKE PRESIDENT, NSEKALIJE IS PERSUADED THAT A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO WESTERN LEADERSHIP IS OCCURRING IN AFRICA, PROPELLED BY SOVIET MATERIAL AND CUBAN PERSONNEL, A CONTEST IN WHICH AFRICANS THEMSELVES ARE LITTLE MORE THAN PAWNS. THEY SEE BELT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE TIGHTENING ACROSS CENTER OF CONTINENT, PINCHING RWANDA MORE AND MORE DIRECTLY. WHETHER OR NOT THEIR STRATEGIC ANALYSIS MAKES SENSE FROM OUR STANDPOINT, THEIR SECURITY FEARS ARE GENUINE AND IMPLICATIONS OF PRESIDENT'S WARNING HAVE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY: IF US AND WESTERN FRIENDS PROVE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO HALT SOVIET ADVANCES, GOR WILL BE FORCED TO TRIM ITS SAILS AND SEEK MILITARY TIES ELSEWHERE. THUS THE "CREDIBILITY" OF OUR RESPONSE TO SHABA MAY VERY WELL AFFECT OUR POSITION IN RWANDA IN MONTHS AHEAD.

6. SOME ADDITIONAL COMMENTS SEPTTEL.
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